

**REMARKS**

This Amendment is submitted in response to the Office action mailed on April 19, 2006, setting forth a shortened three month statutory period for reply expiring on July 19, 2006. Claims 1-9 and 16-20 are pending in this application, with claims 1 and 16 being independent claims. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 16 are amended. Following entry of this Amendment, claims 1-9 and 16-20 will be pending.

*I. Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103**a. Claims 1-3 and 5-9*

The Examiner rejected claims 1-3 and 5-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,609,910, issued to Narayanan (hereinafter "Narayanan"), in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0112737, naming Marcon et al. as inventors (hereinafter "Marcon"). For at least the following reasons, the Assignee respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's rejection.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to require "a whitening compound ... bonded to said end portion by a monomer." The Assignee respectfully submits that Narayanan and Marcon do not, either alone or in combination, teach such a limitation.

Narayanan is generally directed to a flossing tip and neither teaches nor suggests the use of any whitening compound at all, let alone one bonded to an end portion of a flossing tip by a monomer. Likewise, Marcon does not teach or suggest the use of a monomer to bind its compound to its dental floss. Marcon states only that "[e]xamples of some suitable binders may therefore include, but are not limited to, natural waxes from insects, animals or plants, synthetic waxes, petroleum waxes such as polyethylene glycol wax, microcrystalline wax, liquid polyethylene glycol esters of beeswax as well as other water soluble or non-water soluble wax or wax-like compounds, or water soluble or non-water soluble polymers, soaps, gums, resins, and other substances known in the art" (paragraph 0038). The Assignee respectfully submits Marcon teaches instead the use of particular polymers as binding agents, but does not suggest in any way that a monomer can be a binding agent.

Claims 2, 3 and 5-9 depend from claim 1. Since each of these dependent claims depend, directly or indirectly, from a patentably distinct independent claim, the dependent claims are themselves patentable. Accordingly, the Assignee respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw his rejections and allow all these claims. The Assignee makes this statement without reference to or waiving the independent bases of patentability within the dependent claims.

Accordingly, for at least the foregoing reason, the Assignee respectfully submits that amended claim 1 is patentable over Narayanan and Marcon, either alone or in combination, and thus respectfully requests that the Examiner allow claim 1.

*b. Claim 4*

Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Narayanan in view of Marcon and U.S. Patent No. 6,609,527 issued to Brown. For at least the following reason, the Assignee respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's rejection.

Claim 4 depends from claim 1. Since this dependent claim depends from a patentably distinct independent claim, it is likewise patentable. Accordingly, the Assignee respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw his rejection and allow this claim. The Assignee makes this statement without reference to or waiving the independent bases of patentability within the dependent claim.

*c. Claim 16*

Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Narayanan in view of Marcon and U.S. Patent No. 5,851,514 issued to Hassan et al. (hereafter "Hassan"). For at least the following reason, the Assignee respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's rejection.

Claim 16 has been amended in a manner similar to claim 1 to require that the claimed whitening compound be bonded to the claimed tip "by a monomer." As discussed above with respect to claim 1 and incorporated herein by reference, neither Narayanan nor Marcon teach or suggest such a limitation. Hassan is likewise silent. Hassan discloses only formulations for a whitening compound and is silent as to any method or means for bonding such a compound to any surface, let alone a flossing tip. Without such a teaching or suggestion in at least one of the three cited references, amended independent claim 16 cannot be rendered obvious by the cited combination. Accordingly, the Assignee respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw his rejection and allow this claim.

*d. Claims 17-19*

Claims 17-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Narayanan in view of Marcon, Hassan, U.S. Patent No. 5,875,797 issued to Chiang et al., and U.S. Patent No. 5,900,230 issued to Cutler. For at least the following reason, the Assignee respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's rejection.

Claims 17-19 depend from claim 16. Since each of these dependent claims depend, directly or indirectly, from a patentably distinct independent claim, the dependent claims are themselves patentable. Accordingly, the Assignee respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw his rejections and allow all these claims. The Assignee makes this statement without reference to or waiving the independent bases of patentability within the dependent claims.

*e. Claim 20*

Claim 20 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Naryanan in view of Marcon, Hassan, Chiang, Cutler, and U.S. Patent No. 5,519,012 issued to Dolan. For at least the following reason, the Assignee respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's rejections.

Claim 20 depends from claim 16. Since this dependent claim depends from a patentably distinct independent claim, it is likewise patentable. Accordingly, the Assignee respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw his rejection and allow this claim. The Assignee makes this statement without reference to or waiving the independent bases of patentability within the dependent claim.

*II. Conclusion*

After entry of the above remarks and amendments, claims 1-9 and 16-20 remain in the application. In accordance with the amendments and arguments set forth herein, the Assignee respectfully submits the application and all claims are in condition for allowance, and requests such prompt allowance.

The Assignee believes no fees or petitions are due with this filing. However, should any such fees or petitions be required, please consider this a request therefor and authorization to charge Deposit Account No. 04-1415 as necessary.

If the Examiner should require any additional information or amendment, please contact the undersigned attorney.

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Respectfully submitted,

  
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